

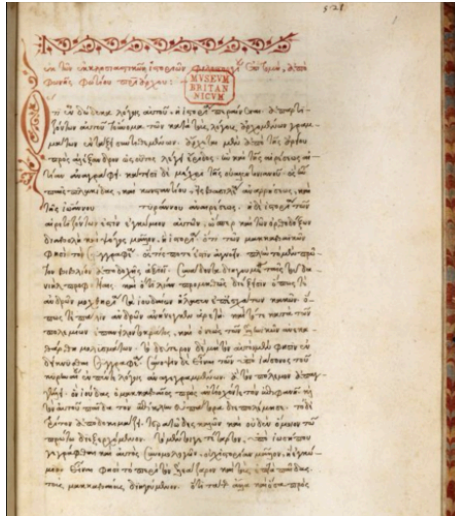
Historical Testimonies About the Sign of the Holy Cross, Which Appeared in Jerusalem (May 7, 351)



The first appearance of the honoured Cross occurred in the year 312, in October, during the time of St. Constantine the Great. It appeared in the sky at noontime and was composed of radiant stars, with the words, “By This, Conquer” (Gr. *ἐν τούτῳ νίκα*; Lat. *In hoc signo vinces*) Thus, by this first manifestation, the honoured Cross became the *labarum*, the standard of the first Christian empire, which proclaimed and conveyed our Orthodox Christian faith and piety throughout the known world.

The second majestic appearance of the Cross took place during the reign of Emperor Constantius (337-361), the son of St. Constantine the Great, in the holy city of Jerusalem on May 7th, 351, the day of Pentecost, when St. Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem. The honoured Cross was comprised entirely of a certain divine light visible to everyone for a week, and in magnitude, it stretched from Golgotha and the Church of the Resurrection all the way to the Mount of Olives.

I. PHILOSTORGIUS (368-439) CHURCH HISTORY, [3:26](#)



Constantius defeated the tyrant, and the sign of the cross appeared to him on this occasion. Its appearance was immense, and the brightness of its rays wonderfully surpassed even the brightness of day.

It appeared in Jerusalem about the third hour of the day, just as the feast of Pentecost had begun. That God-given sign was seen reaching from the Place of the Skull to the Mount of Olives, wrapped everywhere by a large rainbow in the form of a crown.

So the rainbow revealed the favour of Christ, who was crucified and ascended, while the crown revealed the

victory of the king. That bright and venerable sight was not invisible even in the camp. Still, it was clearly seen, and Magnentius and his companions, who had previously been devoted to the service of demons, caused an awkward awe. To Constantius and those around him, it raised an irresistible courage.

II. SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS (380-439) CHURCH HISTORY, [2:28](#)

When he [Gallus] was placed in the Antioch region, the sign of the Saviour appeared in the East. A pillar in the shape of a cross appeared in the sky, a very great miracle for those who saw it.

III. SOZOMEN (400-450) CHURCH HISTORY, [4:5](#)

Cyril directs the Sacerdotal Office after Maximus, and the Largest Form of the Cross, surpassing the Sun in Splendor, again appears in the Heavens, and is visible during several days.

At the time that Cyril administered the church of Jerusalem after Maximus, the sign of the cross appeared in the heavens. It shone brilliantly, not with divergent rays like a comet, but with the concentration of a great deal of light, apparently dense and yet transparent. Its length was about fifteen stadia from Calvary to the Mount of Olives, and its breadth was in proportion to its

length. So extraordinary a phenomenon excited universal terror. Men, women, and children left their houses, the market-place, or their respective employments, and ran to the church, where they sang hymns to Christ together, and voluntarily confessed their belief in God. The intelligence disturbed in no little measure our entire dominions, and this happened rapidly; for, as the custom was, there were travelers from every part of the world, so to speak, who were dwelling at Jerusalem for prayer, or to visit its places of interest, these were spectators of the sign, and divulged the facts to their friends at home. The emperor was made acquainted with the occurrence, partly by numerous reports concerning it which were then current, and partly by a letter from Cyril the bishop. It was said that this prodigy was a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy contained in the Holy Scriptures. It was the means of the conversion of many pagans and Jews to Christianity.

IV. ALEXANDRIAN WORLD CHRONICLE (CREATION - 392 AD)



The year 351 is 5859 years since the creation of the world, the 14th year of the reign of Constantius, and the 9th year of Indiction.

The sign of Christ's Cross was seen in Jerusalem this year. It was about the third hour (the day of Pentecost), bright, extended in the first nine days of May in heaven, from the Mount of Olives to Golgotha, the place where the Lord was crucified. To the East, from where the Lord ascended. And circling around the Holy Cross that appeared, there was a crown in the form of a rainbow.

At the same time, it appeared in Pannonia to Augustus Constantius and his army, which was at war against Magnentius. Constantius attacked, and after they clashed near the city of Mursa, Magnentius was defeated and fled to France with few men.

V. PAUL THE DEACON, MONK OF MONTE CASSINO, BOOK B.

At that time, when Caesar of Gaul was on his way to Antioch, a sign appeared in the East in the sky on the day of Pentecost; that is, a bright column in the shape of a cross appeared in the sky, which extended from Calvary to the Mount of Olives.

Constantinus Gallus also saw this vision.

VI. ACTS OF SAINT ARTEMIUS THE MARTYR, ON THE 20TH OF OCTOBER.

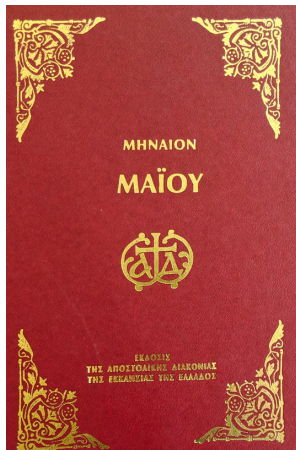


At that time (when he defeated Magnentius), a paradoxical sign of the Cross, of great dimensions and such radiance that it exceeded the light of day, appeared in Jerusalem about the third hour of the day on Pentecost and extended from the Place of the Skull to the Mount of Olives.

VII. TYPICA OF SAINT SAVVAS IN THE MONTH OF MAY.

On the 7th of the month is celebrated the commemoration of the appearance in Heaven of the Sign of the Cross in the city of Jerusalem, at the third hour of the day, when Constantine (Constantius) was Emperor, extending from the holy place of the Skull through the stars to the Holy Mount of Olives.

VIII. GREEK MENAION: 7TH DAY OF MAY



On the 7th of the month, the commemoration of the appearance in Heaven of the Sign of the Holy Cross is celebrated at the third hour of the day, when Constantine, the son of Constantine the Great, was king. And also of the Holy Martyrs Akakios and Quadratus (Codratos).

SYNAXARION

On May 7 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Appearance of the Sign of the Precious Cross in the heavens above Jerusalem (351 AD); and Martyr Akakios the centurion at Byzantium

IX. ALL THE TYPICA AFTER THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CROSS, ADDED

On the 7th of the same month, we celebrate the memory of the appearance in Heaven of the Sign of the Cross when Constantius, the son of Constantine the Great, was King, and Cyril was Archbishop of Jerusalem.

When the Cross was erected before, the earth was sanctified, and now that it was seen, the firmament of Heaven was also sanctified.

X. ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM (315-386), LETTER TO EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS (PG 33:1 16q)



“At about the third hour of the day, an enormous Cross, formed of light, appeared in the heaven above holy Golgotha and reached to the holy Mount of Olives, being seen not by one or two only, but manifest with perfect clarity to the whole multitude of the city; not, as one might suppose, rushing swiftly past in fancy, but seen openly above the earth many hours in plain sight, and overcoming the beams of the sun with its dazzling rays.”

“The whole city struck with a reverential fear tempered with joy, ran immediately to the church, young and old, Christians and heathens, citizens and strangers, all with one voice giving praise to our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, the worker of miracles; finding by experience the truth of the Christian doctrine, to which Heaven bears witness.” (See the full letter at end of pdf.)

XI. ST. THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR (758-817) THE CHRONICLE AD 284-813; AM 5847, AD 354/5



Constantius, emperor of the Romans (24 years), 19th year...

In this year Akakios of Caesarea and Patrophilos of Skythopolis, being Arians, deposed Maximus of Jerusalem and replaced him with Cyril whom they believed to be of their persuasion.

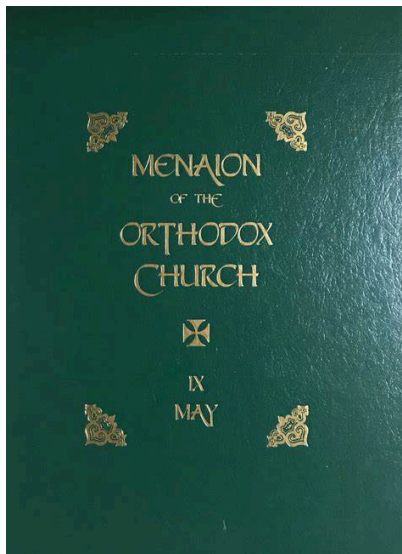
At this time, while Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem, the sign of the life-giving Cross appeared in the sky on the day of Pentecost. It was luminous and stretched from Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, to the Mount of Olives, where He was taken up. All round the sign that appeared was a crown like the rainbow. And on the same day it was seen by Constantius. Concerning this [event] there exists a letter from Cyril to Constantius in which he refers to the emperor as most pious. For this reason some people accuse Cyril of Arianism, alleging also that he had omitted the term ‘consubstantial’ in his catechisms which he gave for the benefit of the uninitiated masses who had come forward to receive holy baptism because of the

miracle of the life-giving Cross. They are, however, deceived and in error. For it was essential to refer to the emperor in a spirit of compromise as ‘most pious’ inasmuch as he had been beguiled

into heresy by the evil work of the Arians, through his own simplicity and not by his intent, and considering also that paganism had not yet been finally overthrown. [It was also essential] not to utter the term ‘consubstantial’ which was as yet confusing many persons and, because of the opposition of its enemies, discouraging those who sought baptism, but instead to make clear the meaning of the consubstantial through equivalent words. This is what the blessed Cyril had done by infolding the Nicene Creed word for word and preaching that the Son was truly God from a truly divine Father.

XII. FROM THE CHURCH SERVICES

THE 7th DAY OF THE MONTH OF MAY COMMEMORATION OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE SIGN OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS IN THE SKY ABOVE JERUSALEM FORMED BY STARS STRETCHING FROM GOLGOTHA TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, AT THE THIRD HOUR OF THE DAY, DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS. COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR ACACIUS.



AT VESPERS

**On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":**

Today the godly multitude of the faithful rejoiceth, * for the heavenly Cross appeareth to the ends of the world, * illumining the firmament with unapproachable light, * maketh the air brilliant * and adorneth the face of the earth. * The Church of Christ hymneth it with divine songs, * worshiping it with veneration, * and the divine and all-wondrous Cross * preserveth it from on high. * By its power are we strengthened; * wherefore, let us approach the Master, saying: * Grant peace to the world and enlighten our souls!

The all-precious and glorious Cross * hath been seen today * as a most honorable ladder * leading up from earth to the heavens * those who venerate it with steadfast faith. * All nations rejoice, * hastening fervently to baptism, * and the Church adorneth itself in godly manner * like unto a bride; * for that which the Jews sought to hide * shineth forth from on high in the air * and saveth those who approach it with faith.

From on high there hath appeared * the rod of divine power, * the Cross sent to us in Sion, * wholly illumined by grace * and boundless light. * The heavenly Cross of our crucified God *

hath shone forth * above glorious Golgotha, * proclaiming to all * that salvation hath come to the world through His sufferings. * And bowing down before it * we chant unceasingly * and ask with faith * that He grant peace to the world * and save our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

The heavens have proclaimed Thy glory, O Lord, the awesome sight of Thy Cross, and all the earth hath bowed down with fear. And we, rendering up glorification, cry out to Thee with thanksgiving: In that Thou as God art dispassionate, Thou hast deigned to suffer for us in the flesh of Thine own will. Save the people whom Thou hast acquired by Thine own blood.

Now & ever ..., from the Pentecostarion. Troparion, in Tone VIII:

The image of Thy Cross hath now shone forth more brightly than the sun, and Thou hast extended it from the holy mountain to the place of the skull, and therein hast revealed Thy might, O Savior. Strengthening all faithful Orthodox Christians thereby, O Christ God, save them.

AT MATINS

Canon from the Pentecostarion, with 6 troparia, including the irmos; and that of the Cross, with 6 troparia.

Canon of the Cross, in Tone IV—

Ode I

Irmos: He Who is mighty in battle cast the chariots of Pharaoh and his power into the sea. Let us chant a new hymn, for He hath been glorified!

Thou hast revealed on earth the radiance of the Cross, and casting down the devil therewith, Thou hast saved the human race, O Lord. Wherefore, we hymn Thy glory.

At the Father's will the Deliverer destroyed disobedience and enmity of mind by the Cross. We sing to Him a new hymn, for gloriously hath He been glorified.

As thou didst plant the tree of life in Eden, O Christ, so hast Thou shone Thy Cross forth in radiance upon the holy mountain as a scepter of victory.

Theotokion: Thee, whom the choir of the prophets foresaw as the portal of heaven and the bush unburnt, O pure Virgin Mother, have we acknowledged as her who gave birth to God.

Ode III

Irmos: The bow of the mighty is become weak, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power; wherefore, my heart is established in the Lord.

We are protected by the sign of the invincible Cross as with a shield, O Master, and the abominable one, unable to endure it, doth vanish with the demonic multitude.

Thy Cross hath made glad all who confess Thee to be God crucified; and it hath shone forth as with all-radiant and unapproachable beauty.

Theotokion: Rejoice, O Mother who knew not wedlock, who contained God the Word in thy womb and gave birth to the Incarnate One, Who is both God and man.

Sessional hymn, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: “Having been lifted up...”—

O Christ God Who showed forth the divine image of the Cross in the sky, to guide those on earth to acknowledge Thee, today never-waning splendor hath shone forth, and the light of Thy countenance hath been signed upon us. And all of us, the faithful, have it as a weapon of peace, an invincible trophy. Twice

Glory..., Now & ever...: The foregoing is repeated.

Ode IV

Irmos: I have heard report of Thee, O Lord, for Thou didst appear upon the earth; and I have glorified Thy power.

Mystically before, but visibly today, Thou hast shone forth the image of Thine all-precious Cross, O Christ.

Shining forth the image of the Cross, O compassionate Savior, Thou hast set at nought the audacity of the iniquitous slayers of God.

Thou hast confirmed the Christian Faith, forming the Cross for us in immaterial light, O Christ.

Theotokion: O pure Mother, blessed Mistress, by thy supplications render God, Whom thou didst bear, merciful to us.

Ode V

Irmos: Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, O Jesus, Son of God, Who hast shone forth the light, hast illumined the morning, and made manifest the day!

When Adam disobeyed in Eden, the deadly tree brought death into the world; but the life-bearing Cross, which hath now appeared, hath illumined the ends of the world.

The Father, Who by His Word created the primal light, now traceth a radiant Cross, bearing witness to the divinity of His crucified Son.

Through faith, in the Father we behold Thee, the Son, the Light above the flood-chambers of the firmament in never-waning light, O Christ, and Thy Spirit hath shone forth upon our souls.

Theotokion: Thou didst not know the pangs of motherhood, O Maiden, having conceived God and given birth to Him in the flesh supernaturally; wherefore, we all glorify thee as is meet.

Ode VI

Irmos: When I was troubled, I cried unto the Lord, and the God of my salvation hearkened unto me.

Let the eyes of the iniquitous be closed, for they are unable to look upon the radiant beauty of the Cross.

Let those who acknowledge that God was crucified in the flesh on the Tree delight in the radiance of the all-pure Cross.

Theotokion: O Virgin who knewest not wedlock, who gavest birth to God, do thou never cease to entreat thy Son in our behalf.

Kontakion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: “Having been lifted up...”—

The all-pure Cross, which opened the heavens which were shut, hath shed upon the earth all-radiant heavenly beams; wherefore, receiving the effulgence of its activity, we are guided to the never-waning Light; and amid battles we have it as a weapon of peace, an invincible trophy.

Ikos: Behold, the awesome sign of the great God which Constantine the Great beheld! And we have heard Jesus speaking therein, Who spake of old to the sovereign emperor of faithful Christians: “Until the Second Coming this sign shall preserve the inheritance of thy city, and it

shall remain until the end of time, and shall be the first of all cities. Let the Cross be its rampart, the weapon of peace, the invincible trophy!”

Ode VII

Irmos: O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, Who saved the children of Abraham in the fire, slaying the Chaldeans whom justice rightly overtook: blessed art Thou!

The material sun hid its rays when it beheld the Sun Who was lifted up upon the Cross at noonday. O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

He Who of old conversed with the God-seer in the fire and the gloom is glorified as God today in the radiant brilliance of the Cross which hath appeared. O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

O equally everlasting Light, shining forth from the Light in the Light, Thou hast shown forth the victory of Thy Cross with Thine all-pure light. O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: We piously hymn forever as Mother of our God her who ineffably and supernaturally received in her womb the immutable God Who came to men in His loving-kindness.

Ode VIII

Irmos: Christ God, Who appeared in the guise of an angel in the fiery furnace of the chanting youths, do ye hymn, O children, and bless, O priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Him Who was seen on the throne of glory and was nailed to the tree of the Cross in His fleshly nature, do ye hymn, ye children; bless, ye priests; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Him Who formed a cross with all-pure light from Golgotha to the holy mountain do ye hymn, ye children; bless, ye priests; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Glorifying One of the Trinity Who illumineth the whole world with the radiance of the Cross, hymn, ye children; bless, ye priests; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: Her who ineffably and without seed conceived and gave birth to Christ God, the joy of the whole world, do ye hymn, ye children; bless, ye priests; ye people, exalt her supremely for all ages!

Ode IX

Irmos: Christ, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, Who united the two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

O Thou Who in the fire and darkness of old didst set forth the laws for the disobedient, Thou hast now traced the image of Thy Cross, more resplendent than the stars, for Thy faithful people, which we magnify as is meet.

Creation lamented in darkness the audacity of those who crucified Thee; and now Thy life-bearing Cross hath shone forth with most reverent light and shown forth the hidden beauty of the Church.

Having set their hope on Thee, Thy rich people set before Thee in advocacy the Cross, Thine awesome protection. In good time grant us deliverance, O Word of God.

Theotokion: Shed light upon us, O thou who gavest birth to Light unapproachable, O Virgin, and with gladness, joy and divine understanding fill us who in honesty magnify thee with purity of heart.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: “To the disciples...”—

The Cross is the guardian of the whole world! The Cross is the beauty of the Church! The Cross is the dominion of kings! The Cross is the confirmation of the faithful! The Cross is the glory of the angels and the wounding of the demons!

AT LITURGY

Troparion of the precious Cross, in Tone VIII:

The image of Thy Cross hath now shone forth more brightly than the sun, * and Thou, O Savior, hast extended it from the holy mountain to the place of the skull, * thereby revealing Thy might, and strengthening all faithful Orthodox Christians. * O Christ God, preserve them ever in peace, * and by the supplications of the Theotokos do Thou also save us.

Kontakion of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Opening the heavens which were shut, * the most pure Cross hath shed most radiant heavenly beams upon the earth; * wherefore, receiving the effulgence of its activity, * we are guided to the never-waning Light; * and amid battles * we have it as a weapon of peace, * an invincible trophy.



THE LETTER TO CONSTANTIUS

Letter of the Blessed Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, to the most godly Emperor Constantius, the seventh of May, concerning the sign of the luminous Cross which appeared in the heavens and was seen at Jerusalem.

(1) From Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, to the most Sacred and Godly Emperor Constantius Augustus—Greetings in the Lord.

This, my first letter from Jerusalem, I send as firstfruits to your Sacred Majesty, a tribute which it befits you to receive and me to offer. Herein your Majesty will find no effusive compliments, no appeals to credulity tricked out in rhetoric's finery, but the straightforward report of a

supernatural, heavenly vision, a vision which guarantees to your Majesty the truth of the predictions contained in the Holy Gospels and now fulfilled by the event.

(2) Let those who have the means crown your Majesty's precious head, bringing many a golden diadem studded with gleaming jewels; we offer you no earthly crown (nay, to the earth earth's gifts return), but hasten to bring your Reverence knowledge of the marvels which, in your sacred reign, God has wrought in the heavens. If I speak of "knowledge," it is no first introduction to divinity I mean (rather is your piety a lesson to others) but only the certification of what you have this long time known. So may you, who already sit upon the throne of your great father, both face the foe with livelier confidence when apprised of the more dazzling diadems with which Heaven has adorned you and, as befits the hour, now more than ever give thanks and praise to the King of Kings, who, by showing forth these marvels in your reign, has given concrete proof of his benevolence towards your Majesty.

(3) For if in the days of your Imperial Father, Constantine of blessed memory, the saving wood of the Cross was found in Jerusalem (divine grace granting the finding of the long hidden holy places to one who nobly aspired to sanctity), now, Sire, in the reign of your most godly Majesty, as if to mark how far your zeal excels your forebear's piety, not from the earth but from the skies marvels appear: the trophy of the victory over death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, even the holy Cross, flashing and sparkling with brilliant light, has been seen at Jerusalem.

(4) During these holy days of the holy Paschal season, [on the Nones of May] at about nine in the morning, a gigantic luminous cross was seen in the sky above holy Golgotha, extending as far as the holy Mount of Olives; not seen by one or two only, but clearly visible to the whole population of the city; nor, as might be expected, quickly vanishing like an optical illusion, but suspended for several hours above the earth before the general gaze and by its dazzling splendor conquering the sun's rays; for clearly, conquered by them, it would have been obscured—had not its own more powerful blaze eclipsed the sun. Immediately the whole population, overcome with joy mingled with fear of the heavenly vision, hastened to the Holy Church: young and old, people of both sexes and every age, even to the maidens closeted in their homes, local and foreign Christians, as well as visiting pagans—all with one accord, and as with a single voice, extolling Christ Jesus our Lord, the Only-begotten Son of God, the worker of wonders. For were they not the sensible recipients of an object lesson that the holy doctrine of the Christians "is not in the persuasive words of wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," a doctrine not announced only by men, but now attested by God from Heaven?

(5) We citizens of Jerusalem, therefore, eyewitnesses of this astonishing miracle, have paid, and shall further pay to God, the Universal King, and to the Only-begotten Son of God, fitting adoration joined to thanksgiving. We have offered, and will continue to offer, fervent prayers in

the holy places on behalf of your Sacred Majesty. Since, rather than bury in silence this heavenly vision, it is our duty to announce the good news to your godly Majesty, we have immediately made haste to do so in this letter, to the end that, rearing upon the sound foundation of your previous faith the knowledge afforded by this fresh demonstration' from on high, with unshakable confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ and filled with all your customary courage as one who has God himself for an ally, you may boldly advance the standard of the Cross, riding with the very banner that streamed in the skies, glory's own device, the badge which redoubled Heaven's exultation upon the manifestation of even its semblance to mankind.

(6) In this miracle, your most Sacred Majesty, testimonies of the Prophets and the holy words of Christ contained in the Gospels find their fulfillment—though they will be more amply fulfilled hereafter. For in the Gospel according to Matthew, the Savior, imparting the knowledge of future events to his blessed Apostles, and through them to later generations of Christians, declared plainly beforehand: 'And then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.' When you take in your hands, according to your wont, the sacred book of the Gospels, you will find written there the predictions of this prodigy. I urge you above all men, Sire, to peruse this prophecy with the more anxious attention on account of the whole context of the passage; for the predictions of our Savior demand the most reverent study if we are to escape injury at the hands of the opposing Power.

(7) These epistolary firstfruits I offer to your most Sacred Majesty. This, my first utterance from Jerusalem, I address to you, my true and devout fellow worshipper of Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, our Savior—of Him who, in accordance with the divine Scriptures, wrought the salvation of the world in Jerusalem, here trampling upon death, by His own precious blood blotting out the sins of men and making available life, immortality and the spiritual, heavenly grace to all who believe. May His power and His grace gladden and preserve you, distinguished by ever greater and more brilliant advances in holiness and proudly rejoicing in noble scions of your royal line. May God Himself, the King of Kings, the bestower of all goodness, guard and keep you, with all your House, for many a long peaceful year to be the glory of Christians and the world.

(8) May the God of all vouchsafe to us your most Sacred and August Majesty in good health, together with all your House, for many a long and peaceful year, adorned with every virtue, displaying your customary solicitude for the holy churches and for the Roman Empire, illustrious for ever more brilliant feats of godliness, ever glorifying the Holy [and Consubstantial] Trinity, our true God, to whom is due all glory forever and ever. Amen.

